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SOME LITURGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

IV.

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THE HOLY LITURGY — III.

The Prayer of Consecration is almost perfect from a liturgical point of view in the American Liturgy, but needs shortening and slight improvement by the elimination of repetitions and a few unnecessary words and phrases. The late Dean Ladd in his "Prayer Book Interleaves" gave an excellent revised and shortened Prayer of Consecration and a similar one is given in "A Parish Eucharist" published by The St. Alban's Press, Washington, D. C. Neither of these make any real change in the content of the Prayer.

A regrettable ceremonial mistreatment of this Prayer is the introduction of genuflexions after our Lord's words of administration of the Sacrament, by those of our clergy who in spite of the evident intention of our Canon, to say nothing of the light shed by eminent scholars on what constitutes the consecration of the bread and wine, still persist in clinging to the Roman theory that the Dominical words, "This is my body" and "This is my Blood," effect the consecration.

It has been pretty well established that neither the Domincal words nor the Invocation or Epiclesis reflects the primitive conception of consecration, but rather the Giving of Thanks, a blessing and invoking of the Holy Name of God after the example of our Lord at the Last Supper, "When He had given thanks He gave it to them."

It was natural, desirable and inevitable that the Spirit-guided Church should develop a Canon of Consecration of some length in order to include in its Eucharistia thankful remembrance of the loving action of God the Father in Creation and Redemption, as well as of the Sacrifice of God the Son, recalling also His action and command at the Last Supper as the Sanction for continuing the Sacramental rite; then to make remembrance of His Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension, and to invoke the sanctifying power of God the Holy Spirit. Thus a Trinitarian order was developed for the blessing and offering of the mystical Christian Sacrifice.

In the Eastern Liturgies the Invocation of the Holy Spirit developed into the explicit Epiclesis which came to be regarded as the formula of Consecration as it is still today. In the West, while the Roman Canon now has no explicit Epiclesis, it does possess an invocation of God at the Offertory, probably of Gallican origin, for the acceptance and blessing of the gifts of bread and wine, as well as again in the Canon itself another invocation of God which Roman scholars call an implicit Epiclesis. At the time of the Gregorian reform it is thought the more definitely expressed Invocation of the Gallican type was removed, because by then in the West the words of Institution, so called, were regarded as the formula of Consecration.

The plain intention of the American Canon is to include the Invocation as a part of the Consecration and this receives added weight by the rubric which requires the Prayer to be said through the Invocation if the consecrated bread or wine be spent and there has to be a second consecration. Thus no special act of reverence towards the elements should be made until that portion of the Prayer of Consecration has been said. The custom of the Scottish Church from which we inherited the Invocation was to bow here

in reverence. According to English tradition too, as may be seen in the Sarum and other English Service books in Latin, such acts of reverence were not genuflexion but a profound bow, as was also universally the custom on the continent until after the Eucharistic controversies of the West and the insertion of the elevation of the Host and Chalice after the Dominical words.

Occasional objection is heard to the phrase, "we are bold to say" in the Prologue to the Lord's Prayer. Of course it is the classic liturgical phrase at that point. There is further reason than its venerable history however, to commend its restoration to our rite. It reechoes the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Seeing that we have a great High Priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need." So here at the consummation of the Christian Sacrifice, "having with us Him that pleads above," there is no time nor place where we can with more entire confidence pray in our Lord's own words, when indeed we are rightly bold to say Our Father.

The Prayer of Humble Access follows immediately after the Lord's Prayer, "The Priest kneeling down at the Lord's Table." They who introduce the Agnus Dei here are entirely disobedient. That hymn or some other according to the rubric follows the Prayer of Humble Access.

Again desirable as it may seem to those who follow Roman usage, the ablutions should not be made directly after the Communion of the people, but after the final Blessing when it is directed what remains of the consecrated elements after the Communion are to be consumed.

At the final Blessing it is entirely inappropriate for the celebrant to remain facing the altar through the first half, then to turn to the congregation for the last half. The peace of God belongs to the people as much as His blessing, and the whole benediction should be said facing the congregation. (Concluded.)

THE BASIC PRINCIPLE AT STAKE

Some years ago the American Church put forth a platform on the basis of which is invited discussion with other religious bodies on the subject of Christian Unity. The platform listed four fundamentals that were felt to be necessary presuppositions in any discussion of unity—the Scriptures, the Creeds, the two Sacraments, and the Historic Episcopate; hence the platform came to be known as "the Quadrilateral"—later, when adopted by the Lambeth Conference, as the Lambeth Quadrilateral. It was the occasion of much discussion, many gatherings, and finally of two or three world conferences on Faith and Order. The whole Christian world was ultimately roused on the subject of Christian Unity.

In recent days our Church, through a special commission, has issued another platform, or proposal, directed especially to the Presbyterians, which they have called "Basic Principles," and we find, to the amazement of many of us, that our former four corners have been reduced to three—the Historic Episcopate has been left out .

This is the more surprising when one remembers that the Historic Episcopate is really fundamental to the other three points; the Scriptures are brought to us and certified to us by a Church which spoke and acted through Bishops; the Nicene Creed was adopted and worked over by Councils which spoke through Bishops; the Sacraments were preserved and handed on to us by a Church which was governed by Bishops. The authority that lies behind Scriptures, Creeds, and Sacraments is the authority of a Church which knew no other government than that of Bishops, which had no other voice than that of Bishops.

By the Historic Episcopate is meant, of course, that arrangement of government, to be seen historically through the centuries, which provides at the top a transmitting, authorizing order (which is generally at the same time a governing order) which, by a care-

ful use of its powers, hands on the Faith, propagates the Church, and ensures its unbroken continuity through the ages.

The document on "Basic Principles" is not silent on this question of the Ministry but its dealing with the point is occupied with the proposal that we ordain, by a special form, some of their ministers and that we, in turn, allow them to ordain some of ours by exactly the same form, such ministers being thereby fitted to officiate in either kind of congregation. Now what this really comes to is a kind of trading of Orders with a religious body whose origin is only 400 years back and whose Orders cannot, of course, be any older than that. In doing this we would be admitting the validity of the sectarian principle that any man may start a church and that such ministry as he sets up is in reality as good as any other ministry—that one cannot on historical grounds make any distinction between them. It is hardly necessary to say that that constitutes an entire change of front for our Church: when one remembers the agonizing care in the days of Elizabeth to preserve the line unbroken, when one recalls the long and costly journeys and the year of difficult negotiations expended by Seabury that he might secure the Historic Episcopate for America, then one may appreciate the weight attached to this matter in our Communion in the past.

And we may well remember that during the long century and a half of our Colonial period no effort to ordain one of our men without a Bishop, to secure the Priesthood by Presbyterian methods, was ever made, though the urgency must sometimes have been great. One may recall, too, the sacrifice, and the humiliation of many of our noblest clergy who have come to us from one or another of the sects, by admitting their mistake and coming in through the way laid down in our Ordinal. There can be no doubt that hitherto the Anglican Communion has put the greatest possible emphasis upon the Historic Episcopate and that it has regarded its preservation and due use as a fundamental principle second to none of the others—that indeed our Catholic character depends upon our holding fast to all four points of the Quadrilateral.

But "Basic Principles" quite plainly throws this fundamental principle into the discard by placing on a par with it the Presbyterian ministry originated by John Calvin four hundred years ago. This, as has been pointed out above, places us exactly on a level with the Protestant sects, it says in effect "We are all sects together," it makes of us a Protestant Sect. There is no other alternative—we are either a part of the ancient Catholic Church, coming in direct descent from the Apostles, or we are a Protestant sect. If the latter, we are one of the smaller sects and our past determination to keep clear the distinction between the Church and the sects looks like nothing but snobbishness. If we are prepared to vote in a way which puts us in the class of the sects, we might better shut up shop and go in with the largest of them, the Methodists, thus working for unity by making one less sect, rather than one more, as is proposed.

But such an outcome is not to be feared; too many of our people, even of those who call themselves "low," have been taught the Catholic doctrines which are woven into the Prayer Book, have been brought up to feel that "after all, there is a difference." Too many have been taught to mean when they say it "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church."

We love our Presbyterian brethren: we long for unity with them; but we cannot buy this unity by the sacrifice of a great basic principle of our Mother Church, one on which hangs our claim to be a part of the Church founded by Our Lord and His Apostles the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

L. E. D.

THE BENEDICTUS QUI VENIT

The origin of the Benedictus qui venit is obscure. It appears originally to have been an anthem, or popular peoples' acclamation, addressed either to the emperor—who would have come from the nave to his throne in the sanctuary as it was sung—or to the bishop

who would have gone from his chair behind the altar to the altar with his college of presbyters for the Eucharistic Prayer proper. In the late mediaeval period the thought seems to have been transferred to the coming of our Lord in his sacramental presence. It probably had something to do with the elevation—probably the elevation just before the communion of the people—and even there the anthem would be a greeting to the communicants. Just when it got attached to the Sanctus is impossible to say in the East and non-Roman West. It is an interpolation and not a very good one. The Sanctus and Benedictus are two distinct liturgical forms. The Sanctus was probably introduced in the Roman Mass from the African Church about the year 150. The Benedictus was introduced from the Gallican Church, not before the eleventh century. The two forms have no literary or liturgical connection.

The fact that it is an interpolation is shown in all liturgies, Eastern and Western (except the Roman, which is unusual in that the prayer starts with intercessions instead of thanksgiving) for the opening phrases of the Eucharistic prayer never mention it. They would do this if it were not an interpolation. They all carry out the thought expressed in the Sanctus—"Truly holy art thou . . . ," "With the blessed powers, . . . we also cry aloud and say: Holy art thou . . . ," "Full is the heaven, full is the earth also of thy excellent glory . . . " The ancient liturgies all have a cue word for the beginning Eucharistic Prayer taken from the Sanctus. There is always the idea of holiness or of glory, and this cue never carries out a thought expressed in the Benedictus.

Our Prayer Books since 1549 have generally omitted the Benedictus—though one or two of the latest revisions allow it as an anthem. Rather we have the perfect expression from a scientific liturgical standpoint—the angelic hymn—then the Amen, the connective meaning Yea verily, of the cue word Glory.

It is worth more than passing notice that it is not sung in practice in the Roman Church to this day after the Sanctus when a priest celebrates, but the ancient connection with the elevation is kept up, and it is strictly forbidden by the Sacred Congregation of Rites to be sung before the elevation of the chalice. Another point worth noticing is this: when a bishop celebrates in the Roman Church it is sung after the Sanctus, and from a study of liturgical remnants, this would be a salutation to the bishop who at some remote period went from his throne to the altar after the Sanctus.

There is no reason that I can see for its interpolation into our liturgy. It destroys the connecting link between the Sanctus and the Prayer of Consecration. It introduces an incongruous thought. If it is sung at all, I suppose the best place would be just before the communion of the people as it is in the liturgy in the Apostolic Constitutions, and which appear to be one of the original places. This has been done in some of the Anglican revisions. It has meaning there, but when it is interpolated between the Sanctus and the Prayer of Consecration, it has no liturgical justification and little meaning. It is psychologically bad in that it drags our thoughts down from the contemplation of heavenly things to an acclamation that may mean our Lord, but probably means our miserable selves.

The Benedictus qui venit in the various Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion:

1549—in, but in a slightly different form.
1552, 1558, 1662—out.
English 1928—permissive, but printed at end of service.
Scottish—permissive.
American—omitted.
South African—omitted.
Indian Liturgy—1933—just before communion.
"Holy things for holy persons"—Blessed is he that . . .
Ceylon 1939—after the Pax after the Lord's Prayer.
Irish 1926—omitted.
Canadian 1921—omitted.

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